



# HIV/AIDS Among African Americans in New Jersey

**As of December 31, 2005**

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- ◆ New Jersey ranked 5th among the U.S. 50 states in the number of African Americans living with AIDS in 2001.
- ◆ One in 63 African Americans in New Jersey is living with HIV/AIDS as opposed to 1 in every 775 among Non-Hispanic Whites.
- ◆ Essex County, with the highest proportion of African American residents (42%), has the highest rate of persons living with HIV/AIDS in New Jersey.
- ◆ The number of HIV/AIDS cases diagnosed annually decreased among African Americans from 1995 through 1999, increased slightly in the year 2000, and then decreased again in 2001, 2002 and 2003. African American residents have accounted for 56% to 60% of all HIV/AIDS cases diagnosed during each of these years.
- ◆ Despite declines in deaths due to HIV/AIDS; death due to HIV/AIDS ranks 5<sup>th</sup> among Blacks in New Jersey.

## **African Americans in New Jersey account for:**

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- ◆ 14% of the State's total population
- ◆ 56% of all people ever diagnosed with HIV/AIDS
- ◆ 56% of the people living with HIV/AIDS in the State

## **Among those living with HIV/AIDS, African Americans account for:**

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- ◆ 64% of HIV/AIDS cases among women
- ◆ 51% of cases among men
- ◆ 60% of cases among injection drug users
- ◆ 36% of men who have sex with men, but 41% of cases diagnosed in 2003
- ◆ 72% of children living with HIV/AIDS

## **Hard hit areas in New Jersey**

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- ◆ About 64% of the State's African Americans living with HIV/AIDS reside in the following ten cities: Newark, Elizabeth, Jersey City, Paterson, East Orange, Irvington, Trenton, Atlantic City, Camden, and Plainfield.
- ◆ 72% of adults/adolescents and 86% of children under 13 living with HIV/AIDS in the Newark metropolitan area (Essex, Morris, Sussex, Union, and Warren counties) are African American.
- ◆ 79% of adults/adolescents in the city of Newark and 93% adult/adolescents in East Orange living with HIV/AIDS are African American.

## HIV/AIDS Challenges in African American Communities

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Despite considerable efforts by the Division of HIV/AIDS Services to target HIV infection through prevention and treatment; HIV is still a major threat in African American communities. Despite declines in infection and death due to HIV/AIDS, African Americans represent the majority of those infected, many do not know that they are infected and many of those at risk do not get tested for HIV. The deaths due to HIV/AIDS still ranks 5<sup>th</sup> among African Americans. Furthermore, African Americans are more likely to test late; and when determined to be infected, either do not access care in a timely manner or intermittently participate in treatment. The public sector alone cannot successfully combat HIV and AIDS in the African American community. Community based efforts help to overcome the current barriers to HIV prevention and treatment, it requires that local leaders acknowledge the severity of the continuing epidemic among African Americans and help reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS. Additionally, HIV prevention strategies known to be effective must be available and accessible for all populations at risk.

## Prevention Efforts Must Focus on High-Risk Behaviors

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*Adult/Adolescent Men.* Among African American men with HIV/AIDS, injection drug use has accounted for the largest proportion (48%) of infections. The second most common exposure for African American men is having sex with other men (MSM), reported by 19%, while 5% report both injection drug use and sex with other men. Additionally, about 22% were related to heterosexual exposure.

*Adult/Adolescent Women.* Among African American women, injection drug use has accounted for 41% of the infections, and 52% were related to heterosexual exposure.

*Data source: Except for cities, rates were based on the 2004-bridged estimates. Cities' rates denominators were based on U.S. 2000 census. Mode of exposure data is based on modified risk exposure categories as described in the NJ HIV/AIDS report as of 12/31/2005.*

## For more information

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- ◆ Call or write: New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services  
Division of HIV/AIDS Services  
PO Box 363  
Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0363  
(609) 984-5874
- ◆ E-mail: [aids@doh.state.nj.us](mailto:aids@doh.state.nj.us)
- ◆ Call the HIV/STD Hotline: 1-800-624-2377
- ◆ Visit our website: [www.state.nj.us/health](http://www.state.nj.us/health)

